

thought that he had made a neat pick-up, but the play was so brilliant that they were glad the umpire had blundered.

The squabbling went on. Every man on our nine came in save Percy and Quip and myself.

"I say, Percy," whispered Quip, "you didn't catch that ball on the fly."

"I know it," answered Percy; "I didn't say I did, either."

"Wouldn't it be honest to go and tell the umpire?" It was hard to say whether Quip were serious or not in putting this question.

"It would be absurd," answered Percy. "In baseball such candor would be sentimental. I read a story in *St. Nicholas* once, where a boy sacrificed a game by announcing to the umpire that he had caught a ball on the short bound when the umpire had already decided it a fly catch. The story was very nice; but the writer didn't understand the duties of umpire and player rightly. The umpire is to judge our plays by what he sees. If he decides me out when I'm not, through his own bad judgment, I grin and bear it; in the same way, if he declares me to have put a man out when I haven't, I grin the more."

Percy was good, but he was not goody-goody. His conduct in baseball, you will notice, was consistent. When the umpire blundered into calling him out at third, he submitted gracefully. When the umpire again blundered in giving him a put-out where he had made none, he said nothing. In both cases he acted on the principle that the umpire was umpire, and that so long as he stood within the letter and principle of baseball rules, his decisions could not

be reversed. Despite the protests of the Juniors, the umpire clung to his decision and ordered them into the field.

We of the Blues did nothing at the bat. Quip and Richards struck out and Ruthers was retired easily at first.

But as this chapter is getting very long, and as the most exciting part of the game is yet to come, I think the reader will be willing to begin the sixth inning in

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH IS CONTINUED AND CONCLUDED THE ACCOUNT OF OUR GREAT GAME OF BASEBALL, AND IN WHICH I MAKE AN AGREEMENT WITH TOM PLAYFAIR WHICH, AS THE READER WILL FIND OUT LATER, HAS AN IMPORTANT BEARING UPON THIS STORY.

O'MALLEY got just such another ball as I had presented him in the first inning. It went further this time, and had it not been for Percy's promptness in chasing and fielding the ball he would have made a home run on it. As it was, O'Malley reached third, amid the jubulations of his fellow-players. Fox knocked a swift liner straight at Joe Whyte, who caught it and sent it to third to catch O'Malley. Unfortunately the ball came on an ugly short bound to Richards and went rolling beyond him. Before he could recover it O'Malley had scored. Earle followed with a single base hit, stole second and remained there, as both Hudson and Poulin struck out.

Our half of the inning was mercilessly short. Whyte batted a fly to Fox in centre field which Fox caught with ease. I struck out. Percy knocked a

grounder and was decided out at first on a very close decision.

Seventh Inning.—Keenan accepted Bennett's chance for an assist on an easy grounder. Cleary, who as a sure hitter had a reputation to sustain, missed the ball three times and retired to explain how it all happened. O'Connor's long fly to left was caught by Percy.

For our side Keenan opened with a model base hit and made second, while Donnel took first on a difficult fly, which O'Connor muffed. Two men on base and no one out. We began to recover from the despondency into which we had been thrown by the events of the last inning. Tom went to the bat evidently determined to bring in a run. He struck at the first ball pitched him. There was a sharp click.

"Foul—out," ruled the umpire.

As a matter of fact Tom had not touched the ball. Earle had snapped his fingers as Tom struck, and the umpire had been deceived. For a few moments Tom was too angry to speak; he bit his lip, and at length recovering himself, called for time. Few if any of the spectators had detected the vile trick. I myself, as I happened to be standing near the home plate at the time, had noticed it.

"It's too bad," I said.

"Yes; but what can't be cured must be endured, I reckon. All the same I'll see it doesn't happen again."

Drew, to whom Tom had motioned, was now at our side.

"Look here, Dan," said Tom. "That was no foul. Your catcher has worked a rowdyish trick, and we don't want it to happen again."

Drew became as angry as Tom. He was an honest boy and somewhat impetuous.

"I'll put that fellow in the field and bring in O'Malley," he said.

"No, no, Dan," objected Tom. "I guess Earle acted according to his lights. But his lights are mighty poor. It's no use making a show of him; but if you'd just tell him that we'll stop playing if he does anything like that again, I think he'll take the hint."

"Leave that to me," said Drew.

He took Earle aside and said a few short, sharp words in a low tone to that worthy which brought the blood to his cheeks; then he returned to his position, leaving the audience to wonder what had been the occasion of the delay. Earle realized that it was to Tom's generosity he owed it that he had not been publicly exposed. The lesson proved a good one. Ever after he treated Tom with unaffected respect.

Nothing daunted, Tom set about coaching with more ardor than ever.

You never heard such a storm of vowels as he set flying through the air. Double A and triple E, and I, O, U, and what-not came volleying forth; and when Harry Quip hit safely he advanced his letters to squares and cubes till he drove the opposing pitcher desperate.

In vain did Drew call time to protest against this singular system of coaching. Our captain had prepared himself against such objections; and showed clearly that he was allowed any language which was not improper or indecent; "and what," he added, "can be more innocent, more impersonal than the

sweet, full, harmonious vowels of our dear mother-tongue?" So Tom was permitted to continue his algebraic coaching. But for all his cries of double A square and triple E cube, Richards and Ruthers struck out, leaving three men on base, and the score 3 to 1 in our disfavor.

Eighth Inning.—I think I was now at my best. In no wise tired, the nervous dread consequent upon facing large boys for the first time had now completely disappeared; and I was determined to give my opponents the sort of balls that they did *not* want. Tom had taught me to study each batter. In playing among ourselves I had followed his advice, and had soon learned to measure any batsman's strong and weak points after facing him twice or thrice.

Drew struck out, O'Malley knocked me a baby fly, which, for a wonder, I held, and Fox followed Drew's example.

Joe Whyte succeeded in hitting the ball, but it was awaiting him at first. I, too, sent the ball rolling feebly toward short field. The shortstop, pressed for time, threw wide to first base. Percy again became a runner by securing his base on balls, thus advancing me to second; whereupon Tom began to invoke all the vowels of the English language in such wise that the pitcher lost his head and gave Keenan his base on a balk. So there we stood, three men on base, when Donnel stepped up to the home plate. Honest John was so nervous that he reached at every ball pitched him, and retired disconsolate, with three strikes charged against him.

Tom received a rousing cheer as he stepped up to the bat. He was calm and collected, and the small

yard was preparing to cheer as one man. He gave the third ball pitched him a vicious blow, and a great cry of exultation arose as it shot out into left field. But O'Malley had been playing far out for Tom's particular benefit, and with a side run succeeded in pulling down what might have been a three-bagger. Score, 3 to 1 in favor of the Juniors.

Ninth Inning.—Assured that the game was now in their hands, the big boys batted carelessly and went out in one-two-three order.

Quip opened for us with a single; and the large boys' nine began to look very serious when Quip stole second and came in on Richards' safe hit into right field. One run at last; another, and there would be a tie. Richards, following Harry's example, dashed for second on the first ball pitched. Earle threw wild and he was safe. Ruthers knocked a bouncer to the second baseman and was retired, while Richards was advanced to third.

The excitement was now intense. But one man out, but one run needed, Richards on third—but, alas! all our weak batters to follow.

"Hit it, Joe Whyte—knock the cover off!" implored Tom. "Keep cool and you'll do it, sure."

And Joe did keep cool. He knocked a long fly into right field. It was prettily caught, but before Hudson could recover himself Richards was half-way home and the game was a tie. I came to the bat and concluded the innings by striking out. Score, 3 to 3. As every boy reader knows, a tenth inning became necessary to decide the game.

Tenth Inning.—Bennett sent a very hot grounder directly over second base. In what manner Keenan

ever got there no one could see; but, all the same, he chased the ball on a dead run, and with his right hand alone secured it far out in short centre field. How he recovered himself so quickly and, as the runner was within a few feet of the base, sent it like a shot to Whyte, and how Whyte held the ball, thrown as it had been, is something that the boys discussed for days afterward. It was a wonderful play on the part of both; and the game had to be stopped till George and Joe had each doffed his cap to the applauding spectators. Just as play was about to be resumed there came another interruption. Joe discovered that a blood-blister had formed upon his right-hand index-finger, which had not been accustomed to handle such vicious throws as George's had been. Tom, after some deliberation, ordered Quip and Whyte to exchange positions, and play was at length resumed. Cleary struck out and O'Connor was retired by Tom on a foul fly.

Now was our chance. We built strong hopes upon this, the tenth inning of the game; for Percy was to be first at the bat. He advanced to the home plate, blushing yet cool. And well might he blush! There was a tumult of applause; the large boys clapped their hands vigorously; the smaller screamed and threw their hats in air and many of them actually danced. Little Frank, who since his outburst had been scoring with bent and averted head to conceal his tears of mortification, now jumped to his feet and offered to bet fifty dollars that Percy would make a run. He had no takers.

I think Percy's turn at the bat must have occupied full five minutes. It was a game of strategy between him and Poulin; both were most deliberate. The

pitcher, who now knew Percy's weakness at the bat, was determined to force him to hit the ball, while Percy was equally determined not to be forced.

"One ball," called the umpire.

"One strike"—Percy had made no attempt to hit at the ball—"Foul."

"Two balls."

"Foul."

"Three balls."

The next came straight over the plate, but as low as Percy's knee. He stood like a statue as it passed him.

"Two strikes."

The next ball promised to be decisive. There was a funereal silence. Frank Burdock's face was aglow with excitement. Many a boy held his breath to await the issue.

The ball at length came straight toward the plate and low. Percy was obliged to take it.

"Foul," called the umpire.

The suspense was renewed.

The next ball came wide.

"Four balls—take your base."

"Now, Keenan, keep it up, old boy," cried Tom.

At the first ball pitched Percy dashed for second. How he flew over the ground! Before he had cleared half the distance a hundred spectators, transported with enthusiasm, came crowding about the diamond. As before, Percy accomplished his great slide. He simply tore up the ground, and in his course sent Drew, who was still waiting for the ball, head over heels. Percy had clearly beaten the ball. But when he picked himself up after his collision with Drew he looked quite pale, although he wore

his usual pleasant smile. Our captain noticed the change.

When the spectators had been cleared off the field and the pitcher had taken his place in the box, Tom called for time.

"Frank," he whispered to Burdock, "get a glass of water and bring it to Percy while I'm talking."

Then for five minutes or more did Tom wrangle with the umpire and Drew about the legality of Poulin's method of pitching. He quoted the rules, brought out "Spalding's Base Ball Guide," and fought every point he could raise to the bitter end. He gained nothing he claimed, but everything he wanted, namely, time for Percy to recover from the bad shaking-up he had suffered.

Of course Tom might have called time and given as the reason that the base-runner had injured himself. But, with his rare tact, he divined at once that Percy, ordinarily cool and self-contained, would be put to the blush by the universal sympathy and suffer more keenly from the pity and attention of the spectators than from his physical injuries. So Tom contrived to get his friend the needed rest, and by his flow of words to centre the attention of every one upon himself. After an interval of some three or four minutes Tom gave in gracefully, and the game was continued.

Evidently Percy had fully recovered. He worried the pitcher not a little by the manner in which he played up and down between the positions of second base and shortstop. He had thrown off his cap, and with his head bent slightly forward and his eyes fixed upon the ball, he moved up and down with a suppleness, a lightning quickness to recover,

to turn one way or the other, that delighted the on-lookers as much as it annoyed the Juniors. Every time that Poulin sent in the ball Percy ran almost half-way down to third; nor, despite the throwing to base of both catcher and pitcher, could he be caught napping.

On the seventh ball pitched, Percy ran down as usual to the shortstop's position, keeping his eye fixed steadily on the ball. He saw that it was over the base and judged that George would strike at it. So instead of stopping midway he threw back his head, and looking straight before him, made for third. He heard the sharp crack of contact between bat and ball, and still running at full speed, turned to see it bound into the hands of the shortstop, who made a feint at throwing it to third, but seeing that Percy was already within a yard of the base, wheeled about and, with deliberate and careful aim, threw it swiftly to first.

The umpire's "Batter out" was drowned by the voice of Drew.

"Home! home!" he shouted, in an excess of excitement.

"Home! home!" roared out nearly the whole infield and outfield.

For Percy, with a boldness not looked for by any one, had not stopped at third. Turning sharply—a turn, by the way, that no other boy in the college but Keenan could make—toward home, so as to lose scarcely a foot, he was more than half-way in before the first baseman fairly realized what had happened.

Bennett saw that the game was in his hands, and with full swing of the arm he sent it straight and

low toward the catcher, who, with his mask and cap thrown off, was standing upon the home plate, his eyes straining and his hands stretched imploringly toward the first baseman. But even as the ball left Bennett's hand Percy, now about twenty-five feet from the home plate, sprang forward and took the most heroic of all his heroic headers.

Ball and Percy! which first? The ball certainly was in the catcher's hand while Percy was still shooting along the ground, but before Earle could turn and touch him Percy, with an effort quick and violent, had stretched out his right hand and touched the home plate. The game was ours.

Tom was beside Percy at once and raised him gently yet quickly from the earth. Our brave base-stealer was ghastly pale and staggered even as Tom bore him up.

"I—I—think I'll sit down, Tom."

Tom hurried him over to a seat, then ran for Mr. Middleton.

"Please, sir, Percy's hurt a little. The boys will all want to shake hands with him, and he'll faint or something, and I know he hates to pose."

The prefect clapped his hands, and standing in front of Percy so as to keep the boys from seeing him, waited till all had passed into the blue grass save Frank Burdock, Tom, and myself.

"How do you feel, Percy?" asked Tom sympathetically.

"It's nothing—just a little scratch, I think," answered Percy.

He had become very languid. His hair was tossed upon his forehead, and as he leaned with his head resting against the back of the players' bench and

his lips quivering, we all perceived that he was suffering keenly.

"Look!" said Tom; "he's bleeding."

The blood we saw was just beginning to enpurple his knickerbockers a little above the knee.

At the sight of the blood Frank was terrified beyond measure.

"Oh," he blubbered, "that's all on account of my swearing. Won't you forgive me, Percy?"

The sufferer smiled, and with the smile something of his color returned.

"I'm not going to die, Frank. In fact, I feel all right again; you see, I cut myself when I ran against Drew's spiked shoes at second. I didn't intend to slide again, but when I saw that chance to take a run, I thought I'd do it even if I had to be carried home. But that last slide did hurt."

"It was great," said Tom enthusiastically. "I've read about it, but it's the first time I've seen a boy make from second to home on an out at first."

"Now," said Percy, rising, "I think we can start for home."

"You can lean on my arm," said Tom.

"No, you don't," exclaimed Frank, with a touch of his former passion. "I'll attend to Percy myself."

Tom, of course, submitted.

"Now, Harry," said Tom, turning to me with his most taking air, "how about spending a night in your uncle's house this summer? Will you do it?"

"Yes," I answered at once.